

## News from Sri Lanka March 2020

The academic year at the Theological College is nearing the end, almost all exams will be completed by the end of the month. Then the students have a break but also have placements while the final year work on their theses.

Before Christmas I had the opportunity to travel to the north of the island to see the work of the Shalom Project to empower war widows and young people. This is led by Rev. Sumethra, with whom I was able to obtain a grant from Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB). I was keen to see how the money was used. The culmination of a two year programme with a group of village women is to provide them each with 10 young hens which will provide food and an income. What excitement on the day the hens were to arrive!



Rev. Sumethra



Rev. J. Nithiyajeevan and his wife.

Over the Christmas holiday I travelled to areas in the north and east of the island which I had not previously visited Christmas Day saw me in Mannar where I attended a Methodist service in Tamil taken by a former student. Rev Jeevan

I especially wanted to see local crafts and I managed to see some basket weavers in a remote village, and yes, I did buy a basket. It seemed that all the village children came to greet me!



I also visited Jaffna at the north of the island and Trincomalle on the east coast. Wonderful scenery and beaches, amazing buildings but many reminders of the civil war which ended over ten years ago



Life at college continues as the New Principal seeks to build up the faculty staff who live on site. There have been several visitors from the UK including some from Queen's Foundation, Birmingham who wish to re establish strong links with the college here.

I enjoyed the visit of two friends from my home church in February. We visited a remote village church with the hope that we can support the work there. The current building was a shop and is at the roadside with the manse below and the chapel above.





Sports Day



Fellowship

My time here is coming to an end. I leave at the end of March after two amazing years, the time has gone very quickly. The experience of living here has changed my perspective on Christianity, here it is a minority religion, just 7.6% of the population are Christian who need to be strong in their faith. I am sad to leave Sri Lanka with the wonderful scenery and friendly people. Being part of the community at the Theological College of Lanka has been a great privilege for which I thank God.

Please continue to pray:

- For the College and Fr. Arul as he settles into his role of principal and is working hard to develop many aspects of college life
- For the students, and all Christians, that their faith may be strong in the face of adversity
- For peace in the island as elections approach.
- For a friend of another denomination who has not had her resident's visa renewed.
- For me as I face many readjustment as I return to England.

Thank you for your prayers and all your messages. I hope to meet many of you on my return to the U.K.

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